

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 990.**

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**990. . Ms A M Siwisa (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

What measures has her department put in place to ensure that all girls and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual and more youngsters are afforded the opportunity to participate in any sport of their choice without being bullied and/or discriminated against?

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##### **Response**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is leading a public discourse through dialogues and engagements in partnership with internal stakeholders, relevant Government Departments, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Development Agencies and other types of implementing partners to address violation of human rights and socio-educational inclusion of children with diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) in Schools. This engagement effort has been initiated to enrich the ongoing consultations on the Draft Guidelines for the Socio-educational Inclusion of Diverse SOGIESC in Schools.

It is expected that the ongoing consultations will give direction to the sector regarding the necessary adaptations in basic education practice, to afford an opportunity for learners with diverse sexual and gender identities to participate in, among others, school sport and co-curricular programmes without discrimination, prejudice and related intolerance.

The adaptations are going to unfold incrementally over a period. Already, in the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE), we have progressed in addressing school choir gender binary of male and female voices, to refer to the choirs as Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass voices, with their related voice variations. This will afford the learner with diverse sexual and gender identity an opportunity to participate in any voice category of their choice.

In respect of Sport, the process will require a more in depth engagement with the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) and the various National Sports Federations and the School Sport fraternity, because we are aware that the different game rules are guided by International Federation standards, which already come with compulsory heteronormative gender prescriptions. So, the DBE is unable to detangle these sports adaptations unilaterally, without the consideration of the international and national sports contexts. A confluence of ideas will be required to guide the sector in this exercise.

In the meantime, as we continue to promote social cohesion and nation building through the Interdepartmental Bullying Prevention Campaign Roadshows, we include Homophobic Bullying as a prominent theme, to send out a strong message by the sector against bullying of learners with diverse sexual and gender identities and promote a school ethos of constitutional values, peace-building and tolerance.